DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 328 963 EA 022 658

AUTHOR Heller, Mel; Fuhr, Don
TITLE How To Combine Effective School Management and Marketing. Tips for Principals from NASSP.
INSTITUTION National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va.
PUB DATE Jan 91
NOTE 4p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; *Change Strategies; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Leadership Qualities; Organizational Communication; *Public Relations; *School Administration; *School Community Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Marketing Strategies

ABSTRACT

Drawing numerous parallels between educational management and business management, this document compares skills, characteristics, and responsibilities of administrators to those of a corporate executive officer (CEO), provides a short list of school assessment questions, describes effective management practices and their expected results when applied to education, and discusses a variety of marketing strategies designed to improve the public's opinion of schools with emphasis on the role of word of mouth. A list of effective marketing tips is also provided. (CLA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Tips for Principals *from NASSP* January 1991

How To Combine Effective School Management and Marketing

ED328963

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Koerner

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA022658

Tips for Principals from NASSP January 1991

How To Combine Effective School Management and Marketing

Managing a business and managing a school or school district are similar tasks. In both cases, success requires a quality product and customer satisfaction.

In the business world, if the quality of the product is below par and/or customer service is poor, the end result is a drop in sales and a rise in customer dissatisfaction. Companies then find it difficult to keep existing customers and attracting new customers becomes virtually impossible.

Managing educational organizations today presents a similar challenge. Although public schools usually have captive audiences, operating a school or school district requires producing a quality education product and then marketing that product effectively to the parents and community to gain their support.

To produce a quality product, both business and school sectors require leaders who can:

- Formulate a vision
- Communicate effectively with employees
- Provide incentive for top performance
- Evaluate programs and personnel
- Practice fiscal accountability
- Market outcomes effectively.

Leaders of well-managed companies and schools combine these leadership abilities with determination and enthusiasm because they know such qualities make organizations successful.

In most circumstances, school systems that produce quality educational outcomes do so primarily because their administrators have the courage and the abilities to evaluate their schools and make the necessary changes based on evaluation results. The environment of operations progresses from what does not work to what does.

Public education taxpayers, like stockholders in the business world, expect to see productive changes made if the educational outcomes are not up to par. If no change occurs and the quality of education continues to decline, the schools, school district, and especially the school administrators inevitably come under attack. Whether or not the attacks are warranted, educators are the visible leaders and thus targets of criticism.

A CEO may be able to direct a failing company for awhile and remain somewhat isolated from the public and from the stockholders. School administrators do not have the luxury of isolation; they are the legal as well as the perceived directors/managers/leaders of the enterprise.

Suppose a recognized CEO from one of the Fortune 500 list of successful companies was invited to your school/school district to assess operations.

- Would the CEO observe motivated teachers and teaching?
- Would he or she notice the status quo has been challenged with emphasis on achieving desired outcomes?
- Would he or she notice that within the school there is a spirit of teamwork and administrators and staff members work together to form a creative partnership?
- Would he or she recognize that excellent teachers are rewarded while marginal teaching and poor performance are remediated?

Or, would he or she conclude that maintaining the status quo best characterizes your school or district? If this were the case, how would your taxpayers respond if the CEO announced: "If we ran our company like you are running this school/district, we'd be out of business."

Effective Operations Management

During the last decade, public education in this country has been widely criticized. Low test scores, increased student discipline problems, teacher absenteeism, and rising dropout rates are just some of the factors that plague schools and school systems. School administrators must be concerned about how our schools are operating. They are either working or not working. If the education product does not measure up to acceptable standards, then immediate action is required.

Discovering where the breakdowns are and then doing something to correct them is essential if we are to successfully market our schools and school districts to the public. When the product of education improves through better prepared students, we can then say to investors, "Your tax dollars are working; they are not wasted on ineffective programs."

Achieving a quality educational product in our school districts begins by incorporating the following management practices:

- Initiate practices aimed at reducing anxiety among staff members, such as fewer meetings, less paperwork, and more recognition of good performance
- Establish expectations and communicate them to all employees
- Formulate goals (priorities) by involving administrators, teachers, and community representatives

EA022 658

- Conduct annual reviews of achievement followed by specific plans to improve weaknesses
- Involve all staff members in planning faculty meetings and staff development programs
- Evaluate all personnel on a regular basis based on individual goal performance.

Once such practices are implemented, achieving desired educational outcomes will become an enthusiastically sought-after goal. Pride, dedication, and teamwork among employees will increase. Personnel within the school district will soon recognize the importance of offering an accountable instructional product to students and the general public.

Market Your School

Each school must promote its quality products in a convincing, honest, and motivating fashion. Fortune 500 companies promote and sell the strengths of their products to the public on a daily basis. Schools and school districts should do the same.

Incorporating various marketing strategies such as advertising, conducting parent opinion surveys, seeking input from parents and business leaders, and sending out annual reports relating to school district operations will not only keep the public informed, but will also contribute significantly to gaining community and parent support.

School districts that attempt such marketing practices do so because the emphasis is on removing practices and procedures that don't work and employing educational programs and policies that do.

Bumper stickers; pencils; t-shirts; bulletin board displays recorded on videotape and shown in senior citizens centers, public libraries, town hall, malls, and post offices; weekly newspaper articles with photographs; and public service radio and television spots publicizing school events are just a few marketing ideas the school and school district could implement.

Finally, any effective marketing strategy begins by word of mouth. Parents in any school district can usually tell you where the good schools, teachers, and administrators are and why. Therefore, all school personnel should communicate positive information to the public about their colleagues, programs, and students.

Constant downgrading of programs and policies by administrators/teachers who are, themselves, the developers of these products only destroys the educational product and image they are attempting to market.

Conversely, when personnel from a school district speak in a positive and supportive fashion about their jobs, schools, colleagues, and, most important, the students, teamwork is built at all levels. This teamwork builds pride; pride builds quality; and quality builds support.

If the educational product in your school and school district is not up to par, then you must inform the public what you are doing to correct the deficiencies. By the same token, when your schools are "producing," with motivated, enthusiastic students and teachers, let the public know. Enthusiasm and pride in the educational product foster more enthusiasm and pride.

Poor schools are not worth emulating, but good schools can be models of excellence in terms of process, product, and leadership. We must market our successes. If you do that effectively, perhaps CEOs will visit your school or school district to find out how they can better manage and market their organizations and products.

Written by Mel Heller, professor of educational leadership and policy studies at Loyola University of Chicago; and Don Fuhr, associate professor of educational administration at Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.

Effective Marketing Tips

The following tips were offered by John Wherry, former executive director of the National School Public Relations Association in the December 1986 *Bulletin*.

- School family advisory committees can be appointed and meet regularly with the principal to discuss whatever is on the staff's or principal's mind. All staff groups should be represented.
- Use a "Good News Report" from each staff group as a 10-minute opener to occasional total-school family meetings during the year. Cafeteria workers, aides, secretaries, custodians, teachers, all can report on something positive with little or no advance notice.
- Business cards for every staff member are popular. The "We think you're important" message they convey to the staff member is as important as how the cards are used.
- A weekly staff newsletter is perhaps the most versatile and useful internal communication vehicle you can use.
- Offer school staff members (again, representing all staff) as speakers for local service clubs.
- Invite the superintendent, school public relations professional, member of the central office supervisory staff, transportation supervisor, maintenance supervisor, or other key school district staff member to give a brief overview of the scope of their operations.
- Invite a television, radio, or newspaper reporter to address the staff.
- Establish a building public relations committee composed of representatives of all staff groups.

Tips for Principals *is a monthly publication of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091. John A. Lammel, President; Timothy J. Dyer, Executive Director; Thomas F. Koerner, Associate Executive Director, Editorial Director; Carol A. Bruce, Associate Director of Publications; Patricia Lucas George, Editor; Jody Guarino, Publications Specialist; Lori Price, Assistant Publications Specialist.*